

Minutes Neighborhood Advisory Commission October 6, 2021



Minutes of the Neighborhood Advisory Commission (NAC) held on Wednesday, October 6, 2021, virtual meeting using Microsoft Teams platform

(MEMBERS) Present: Maureen Eastty, Jana Lynn Granillo, Matt Heil, Linda Knutson, Melanie Larimer, Christopher McCabe, Michael McLendon, Mark Rude, Daniel Schugurensky, Joel Stern, Nicholas Weller, Justine Yates

(MEMBERS) Absent: Hannah Moulton Belec, Diane Harden, Barb Harris

City Staff: Brianne Fisher, Mayoral Aide; Cathy Hollow, Tempe City Traffic Engineer, cathy_hollow@tempe.gov; Eric Iwersen, Interim Transportation and Engineering - Deputy Director, eric_iwersen@tempe.gov; Elizabeth Thomas, Neighborhood Services Specialist; Shauna Warner, Neighborhood Services Manager

Guests: Martha Carter, Class 37 of Tempe Leadership; Randy Dittberner, Lee Engineering

Agenda Item 1 – Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 5:42 p.m. by Vice Chair Melanie Larimer

Agenda Item 2 – Attendance Roll Call

Present: Maureen Eastty, Jana Lynn Granillo, Matt Heil, Linda Knutson, Melanie Larimer, Christopher McCabe, Michael McLendon, Mark Rude, Daniel Schugurensky, Joel Stern, Nicholas Weller, Justine Yates

Absent: Hannah Moulton Belec, Diane Harden, Barb Harris

Agenda Item 3 – Public Comment

None.

Agenda Item 4 – Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes: September 1, 2021

Motion: Commissioner Weller made a motion to approve the September 1 minutes as presented.

Second: Commissioner Rude

Result: Approved by a 12-0 vote of those present.

Commission Member Ayes: Maureen Eastty, Jana Lynn Granillo, Matt Heil, Linda Knutson, Melanie Larimer, Christopher McCabe, Michael McLendon, Mark Rude, Daniel Schugurensky, Joel Stern, Nicholas Weller, Justine Yates

Absent: Hannah Moulton Belec, Diane Harden, Barb Harris

Agenda Item 5 – New commission member introductions, Linda Knutson and Mark Rude

NAC members welcomed newest members Mark Rude and Linda Knutson. Mark is the newest and only NAC member from zip code 85284. He is a current HOA President and he and his wife have five grown children and 3 grandchildren. Linda is the Co-Chair of Wilson Art and Garden Neighborhood Association, located between Maple Ash and Mitchell Park. She has previously served as a Tempe Community Council Board Member and Traffic Mitigation Steering Committee Member and has experience securing Maryanne Corder Neighborhood Grants.

Agenda Item 6 – Streetscape and Transportation Enhancement (STEP) Manual Revisions

Tempe City Traffic Engineer, Cathy Hollow, shared that the existing STEP manual was last updated in 2008. More varied requests (beyond speedhumps) and feedback from September 2020 meetings of the Transportation Commission and Tempe City Council prompted a revision. Lee Engineering was hired to help lead the update process.

Randy Dittberner with Lee Engineering then described the update process components:

- ❖ Stakeholder advisory meetings
- ❖ Review of other cities' practices
- ❖ Public meetings (June 2021)
- ❖ Online survey - generated over 100 responses

Some key challenges identified by stakeholders and survey respondents included:

- Petitioning process (covid only adds to the mix - some residents reluctant to engage face to face)
- Hard to reach absentee owners
- Difficulties gaining consensus
- A household is assumed to oppose traffic calming until they sign a petition in support
- No guidance on whether renters or owners are authorized to sign petitions

Proposed changes to the manual include:

- ❖ Renaming the manual as Neighborhood Traffic Calming Guide. (entire draft guide was enclosed in NAC member meeting packets)
- ❖ Inclusion of speed cushions with same process and guidelines as other devices (currently a separate policy and guidelines)
- ❖ Qualifying thresholds the same for all devices
- ❖ Permittance of outside funding - all qualifying thresholds will apply
- ❖ 100% approval adjacent to a device maintained but primary street petition threshold reduced from 75% to 70%
- ❖ *Upon request*, city provides an online petition platform as a supplement to hard copy petitions
- ❖ *Upon request*, city mails information (which includes a link to online petition) to petition boundary
- ❖ City may mail a certified letter to non-respondents, to which no response is considered support
- ❖ Single family: renter or owner may sign and Multi-family: owner or manager may sign
- ❖ City staff may use their professional judgment and expertise to modify the process or the traffic calming plan

Comments and questions included:

- Appreciate work and time that went into this. I remain opposed to 100% requirement for adjacent homes. Many home lots sold, can have as many as six owners when a condominium complex goes in giving more power to one area or corner.

The professional judgment element may present a way to address that as well as testing in your specific neighborhood.

- With manual noting it as 100%, concerned a homeowner who doesn't like it can thwart it. What about other cities? And, was it 100% on all traffic mitigation devices?

Phoenix, Scottsdale, Peoria, Mesa, Chandler require 100% on all devices. Some provide a # of feet distance from device while other cities noted adjacent to or immediately adjacent to device. Initially, data came from city websites. Lee Engineering circled back with each city for greater clarification.

- Like the online petitioning option. Have concern about 70% threshold on primary street. Any consideration given to 400-500' from device or a mid-block point? I have a number of apartments or homes on my street.

Thus far, this has not really posed an issue. Residents can have legitimate reasons for not wanting to have a device adjacent to their residence, may be possible on an extra long street to move location of devices a bit. Drawing petition area is difficult. City almost needs to be able to look at street on a case by case basis, depends on the street configuration.

- Speed thresholds make sense. What about those areas where you wouldn't expect to see an issue? Does that fall within staff discretion? Also, what about multi-family that falls within boundaries where manager is able to sign and is opposed to traffic calming but residents would like to see it?

Not typical for an apartment complex to be in the boundary but when that has happened, they have been in support of traffic calming. Staff discretion may be an option.

- Will street classification system be included in the guide for arterial, collector and neighborhood streets?

Yes, system and map will be included in guide.

- Are Maryanne Corder Neighborhood Grants still available?

Yes, all protocols and thresholds would have to be followed.

- What if a new resident moves in where a speed cushion exists and wants it removed?

Likely, same process for installation would be required - in reverse.

- Can a owner overrule a renter or vice versa?
- Is there an appeal process if neighborhood doesn't meet thresholds?
- Have you looked at data to see how many petitions were thwarted due to this threshold?

Draft manual does not provide that level of detail. Perhaps if the required adjacent % threshold is nearly reached, can be looked at further, staff and consultant will seek to clarify.

- What about 4-way intersections seeking traffic calming circles? What % is required if say 8 houses could be impacted?

Typically, each of four corner properties would be in 100% tier with then potentially a 70% tier for homes a bit further down the street or for other devices.

Next steps for the guide include an October Transportation Commission meeting and an October 21 City Council Work Study Session for their review and comment. Eric Iwersen, Interim Transportation and Engineering Deputy Director, concluded the draft review by thanking NAC members for their attention and feedback. He added that additional time may be needed to resolve some of the issues brought forward and to make sure they are addressed with consideration and reflection of the provided feedback, quality of life and flexibility of traffic control in mind.

Agenda Item 7 – State of the Neighborhoods & Awards 2022 – Event Ideas and Awards Category Discussion

NAC has played a part in the planning of the State of the Neighborhoods & Awards Event from year to year. The last two events were different from all prior years due to covid-19 limitations and experimentation efforts. The 2020 event featured an honoree parade and a live streamed Mayoral address and awards presentation, both well received. In 2021, a very limited in-person event with award winner honorees and a virtual audience only was hosted.

Dating back prior to covid, NAC members were working with staff discussing more neighborhood connection focused opportunities for the State of the Neighborhoods. Brianne Fisher, Mayoral Aide, shared that Mayor Woods is also wanting to change up the 2022 State of the Neighborhoods and create a more relaxed and neighborly focus and vibe. This reimagined event could include elements like music, food, activities, informational tables/booths perhaps with local businesses or vendors and opportunities to engage. The Ruben Romero Ramada area at Kiwanis Park sits on over one acre, has several onsite amenities like large covered ramadas with picnic tables and a playground area and can easily and safely accommodate 200 people or more. This location is being considered as the event site for a late March event. Mayor Woods and staff are seeking commission member buy in, feedback and assistance to help make a reimagined event successful.

NAC members expressed their support for this new direction. Brianne specifically requested NAC member help with encouraging nominations for all awards categories, particularly nominations from less engaged neighborhoods and reflecting the diversity of Tempe. She also requested assistance creating and executing a networking activity and for some event planning subcommittee volunteers to help with event communication and planning. Commissioners Knutson, Stern, McCabe and Vice Chair Larimer (schedule permitting) volunteered to serve on the planning subcommittee.

NAC members can modify existing awards descriptions, consider adding a new category or an area of focus such as emphasizing youth eligibility. Vice Chair Larimer added that NAC members currently select the award winners for the Neighbor of the Year, Property Beautification and Alley Upkeep categories. Staff noted that other awards given out at this event include: Arts and Culture (Arts and Culture Commission), Sustainability (Sustainability Commission), Water Conservation (staff from MUD) and last year, the first Dolores Huerta Scholarship (Human Relations Commission) was awarded. Any new awards categories should complement rather

than compete with existing awards categories and there may be opportunities to collaborate on an awards category.

Agenda Item 8 – Communication and Grants Working Group Updates

There were no formal working group updates provided at this meeting.

Agenda Item 9 – Proposed Future Agenda Items

- Code Compliance (confirmed for November)
- Theft of catalytic converters from vehicles
- Housing affordability
- Homelessness, hotel conversions (could potentially be merged with housing affordability)

Agenda Item 10 – Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 6:46 p.m.

Prepared by: Elizabeth Thomas

Reviewed by: Shauna Warner